



Marge entered the South China Sea on 12 September as a tropical depression, after crossing northern Luzon (Figure 4-15). She quickly developed to tropical storm strength 125 nm northwest of Cape Bolinao. The early stages of Marge can be traced to a weak circulation in the monsoon trough appearing on the synoptic surface analysis 750 miles eastsoutheast of Luzon (08/0000 GMT). This system tracked westward during the next four days as it accelerated to a speed of 11 to 12 knots before making landfall on northern Luzon.

A narrow, mid-tropospheric, subtropical ridge was positioned over southern China as Marge emerged into the South China Sea. Little change in intensity or orientation of the ridge occurred during the next few days, dictating a westerly course which eventually caused Marge to strike North Vietnam 2 1/2 days later.

Maintaining a forward speed of 11 knots, Marge intensified steadily after entering the open waters of the South China Sea, reaching typhoon force as she

passed 200 nm south of Hong Kong on the morning of the 13th (Figure 4-16). The minimum measured central pressure by aircraft reconnaissance, prior to the typhoon crossing the no-fly line, was 964 mb early in the evening of 13 September.

Striking central Hainan Island early on the morning of the 14th with sustained winds estimated near 80 knots, Marge emerged into the Gulf of Tonkin with tropical storm force some 12 hours later. Eventual landfall was made 60 nm north of Vinh, North Vietnam during the early morning hours of the 15th. Subsequently, Marge dissipated rapidly inland over the highlands of Laos.

One interesting feature of Marge during her transit of the South China Sea was her small size. Similar to Louise, as a typhoon, her circulation did not appear to exceed 150 miles in diameter as evidenced by ship and aircraft reconnaissance data. Typhoon strength winds were probably confined to the wall cloud region.



FIGURE 4-15. Marge as a tropical depression 20 nm west of Luzon, 11 September 1973, 2342 GMT. (DMSP imagery)



FIGURE 4-16. Tropical Storm Marge near typhoon strength 225 nm south of Hong Kong, 13 September 1973, 0106 GMT. (DMSP imagery)